

House Republican Press Release

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Williams Criticizes Flawed Campaign Reform Bill



Watertown Legislator Assails Measure as a Complete Sham

HARTFORD- State Representative Sean Williams (R-Oakville) today voted in opposition to a campaign finance reform bill in the early hours of the morning, following over eight hours of debate in the state senate, and seven hours of debate in the state house. Williams dismissed the legislation as a “toothless reform filled with loopholes, which will cost taxpayers millions.”

During the regular session of the Connecticut General Assembly, both the House and Senate passed differing forms of campaign finance reform bills, both purporting to remove special interest money from the election process. No agreement was reached before the adjournment of the session, and Governor M. Jodi Rell assembled a task force to hammer out details for a reform bill, and called the legislature into special session to address the issue.

Williams noted that the bill will take a minimum of \$20 million from the General Fund every year to pay for the campaigns of those running for Governor or other constitutional offices, state house and state senate. Such expenditures would blast through the spending cap. Other major flaws in the bill include provisions that make it tougher for third party candidates to qualify for public financing, as well as an unfair strengthening of party committees.

“I have long been an advocate of cleaning up the system, and removing special interest money from the campaign and electoral process,” said Williams. “But I believe the way to do that is to ban lobbyist contributions, and to eliminate PAC and adbook contributions. The package we were asked to vote on last night doesn’t remove special interest money from politics, it consolidates it in the hands of party bosses and incumbents, while asking taxpayers to foot the bill”

Williams added that he regretted parting company with the Governor on the issue. “This is unfortunately one important issue where Governor Rell and I do not agree. She will be signing a bill that she had little input on, and Republicans in the General Assembly had virtually no input on. This is not bipartisan reform; it disappoints me that this is what passes for reform.”

The bill passed the House 82-65, and will heads to the desk of Governor M. Jodi Rell, who is expected to sign it.